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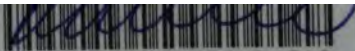
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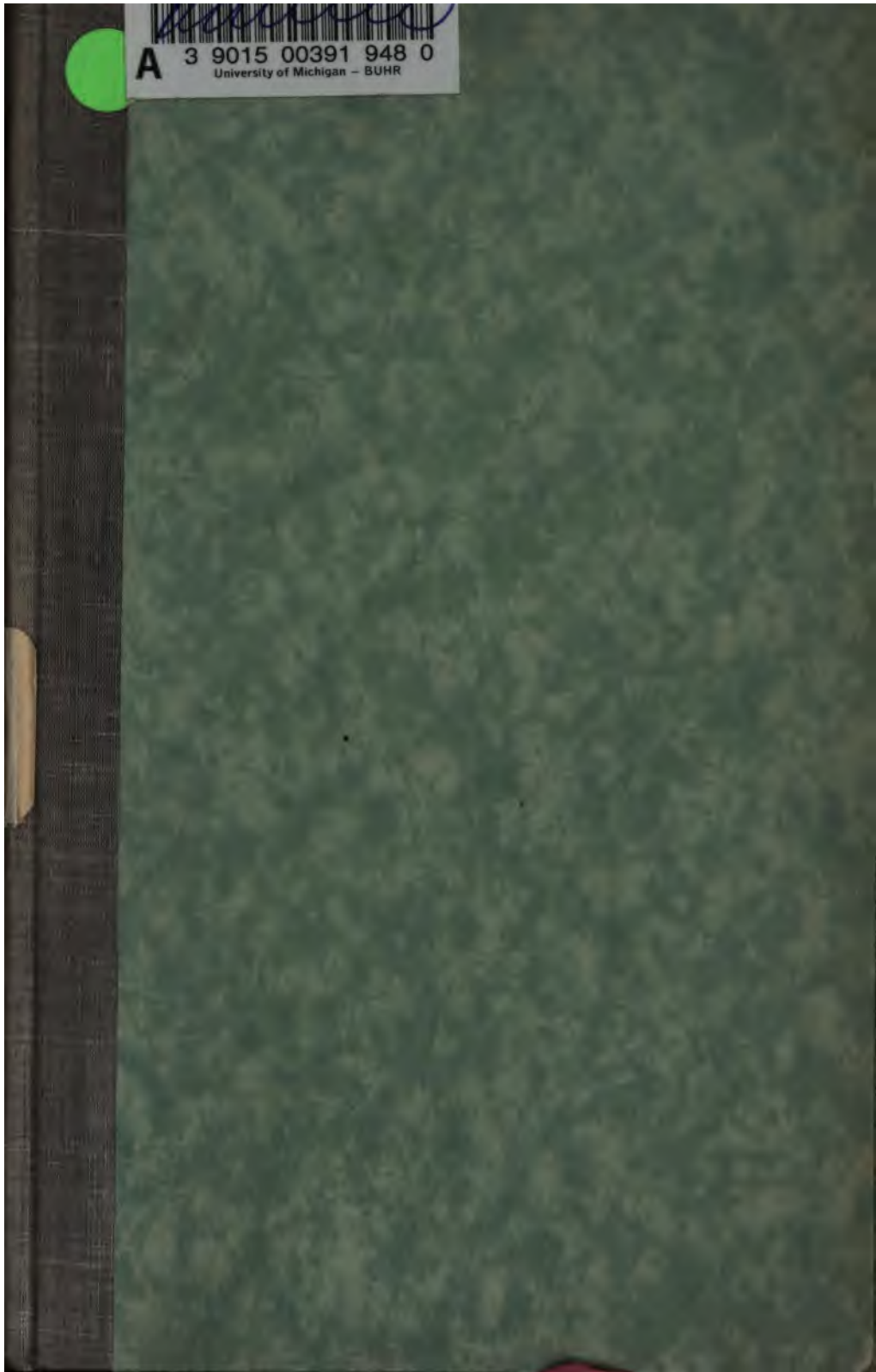
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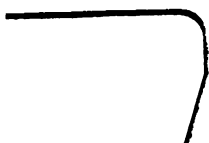
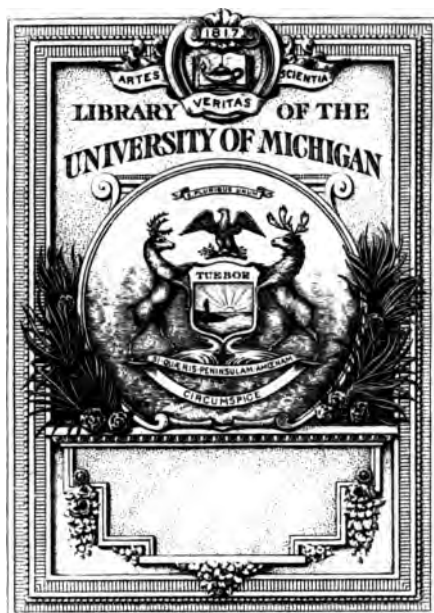
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J A C O B B R Y A N T, Esq.

IN DEFENCE OF
P H I L O S O P H I C A L N E C E S S I T Y.

B Y
J O S E P H P R I E S T L E Y, LL. D. F. R. S.

Drink deep, or taste not.



POP.

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A PREFATORY LETTER.

S I R,

IT is with real pain that I put into your hands the following letter, written in such a manner as may perhaps give *you* pain, and it would have given me real pleasure to have addressed you with that *respect* to which your character has hitherto intitled you. But in this case you left me no choice. Such an *Address* as yours could not be answered, with propriety, in any other manner than that in which I have treated it. It is only *measure for measure*, and, indeed, far short of that. For all that

A PREFATORY LETTER.

I censure in you is your challenging me, in so high a tone of authority, on a subject of which you are perfectly ignorant. I nowhere tax you with *hypocrisy*, *impiety*, or *infidelity*; though I could have found just as much pretence for those charges with respect to you, as you have with respect to me.

It might, I often think, have a good effect to temper the acrimony of controversial writing, to consider ourselves as addressing our antagonists *in person*; as we should not then be so apt to neglect the forms of *civility*, that we hold ourselves obliged to observe in a personal interview. Had you, Sir, been introduced to me on purpose to *talk* with me on the subject of necessity, or had we met accidentally, and entered upon it, you would have felt, I am confident, an insurmountable aversion to pronouncing to my face what you have addressed to me in print. It would have appeared to yourself unpardonable rudeness. What you now term *arrogance*, *insincerity*, &c. you would have softened

A PREFATORY LETTER.

softened down to a *mistake, misapprehension, oversight*, or some other thing of the same venial nature.

We are all too apt to lose sight of the *persons* of our opponents, and with that, to forget our good manners; and indeed custom has, in a manner justified a good deal of asperity in controversial writings of all kinds; so that the world in general is not so much offended at it, as they would be at any rudeness in conversation. And with respect to the proper *use* of controversial writing, I do not know but that this may have been the best upon the whole; as, by this means, men have been roused to exert themselves to the utmost in the defence of their several opinions; so that the subject in debate has been more thoroughly investigated, for the benefit of the cool bystander.

But with respect to the writers themselves, if my experience may be thought to qualify me to judge in the case, the preference is unspeakably in favour of an *amicable discussion* of any important question. The controversy that I look back upon with

A PREFATORY LETTER.

even wished for an opportunity of being introduced to his acquaintance, and I am truly sorry that this *Address* of yours to me, and the manner in which I have been obliged to reply to it, will make it rather too unpleasant a thing to both of us.

Notwithstanding this, which is a subject of real regret to me, I am with sincere admiration of your learning, and esteem for your character,

S I R,

Your very humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

London, 28th April, 1780.

E R R A T A

P. 35, l. 12 from the bottom, for *denifition*, r. *definition*.
P. 43, l. 16. for *man*, r. *men*.

TO JACOB BRYANT, Esq.

S I R,

I Cannot do less than take some public notice of an *Address* to me from a person so distinguished in the republic of letters as Mr. Bryant; and had your letter been uniformly respectful, I should have thought myself honoured by it, though you had differed from me ever so much in opinion, and had even expressed ever so much abhorrence of the doctrine I have maintained. But when you compliment me in some places, and load me with abuse in others; taxing me with *self-sufficiency, arrogance, insincerity, impiety and infidelity,*

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and

A PREFATORY LETTER.

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E R R A T A

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begun with assuring me, that the doctrine of necessity was "a subject you had much considered, and that you had even long ago, for your private satisfaction, written down your thoughts upon it," and also said, that "when you took my treatise in hand, you formed a resolution not to be too hasty in your conclusions, but to read it over with that attention and care which every thing deserves that proceeds from a person so justly celebrated," you are pleased to say, "as Dr. Priestley;" I should have been apt to imagine, that the pamphlet had been a mere *jeu d'esprit*, written by way of an experiment, to try how much absurdity might be passed upon the public under the sanction of such a name as yours.

Finding the work to be really *your own*, that hypothesis must be set aside; and I am obliged to have recourse to some other. But the fact is so extremely strange, that I do not know whether any thing that has occurred to me will throw any light upon it. Two of my conjectures are all that I shall mention. The first is, that though you say you formed a resolution not to be too hasty in your conclusions, and you did not really

execute it. The other is, that you have been so bewildered in this business, that you have neither been able to preserve your temper, nor retain the perfect use of your faculties. For you say, p. 13, "Your arguments confound, rather than convince; so that believe me, good Sir, I scarcely know where I am, or upon what ground I stand."

Upon the whole, this solution, suggested by yourself, appears the most probable. Indeed, Sir, in this region of *metaphysics*, you have quite lost yourself. You do not know where you are, or on what ground you stand; as I have little doubt of fully satisfying all competent judges of the subject, and perhaps even yourself; though, considering your age, and your long study of this subject, I cannot promise myself much success, in my attempts to disentangle and new-arrange your ideas.

As to myself, I may, to be sure, be mistaken, but I think that, with respect to this subject, and your address to me relating to it, I *do* know perfectly well where I am, and on what ground I stand. My only difficulty is how to place in the clearest light

a variety of fallacies and mistakes, that are sufficiently manifest in every light. It is this *choice* that breeds all my *care*. This, Sir, though you may think it said lightly, I should not advance at random. My letter to you, as well as yours to me, will be open to the public; and my reputation (which I must suppose to be as great as you represent it) is at stake.

SECTION I.

Observations relating chiefly to CANDOUR.

IN the whole of this business, I shall, if possible, take away every pretence for *one* part of your charge against me. You say, p. 119, that "I write with so much reserve, and my words are so guarded, that you are not always sure that you arrive at my true meaning." You also say, p. 54, that "I soften and extenuate things by means of ambiguous terms, of which

"I afterwards take an undue advantage, and
 "that I speak in general when I should be
 "particular, and in particular when I should
 "be general."

Now, whatever other faults I may be chargeable with, I had flattered myself that I was innocent of *this*; and, that I had been generally *thought* to be so. If not, I have taken a good deal of pains to little purpose. I had thought that, of all writers, I had always written with the least reserve, and that it had been hardly possible to mistake my meaning. I have been commended even by several of my antagonists for my *fairness* in this respect. Dr. Price says, in our *Correspondence*, p. 33, that "I cannot be
 "sufficiently admired for my fairness in the
 "pursuit of truth, and that I follow it in-
 "to all its consequences, without attempt-
 "ing to evade or palliate them."

As I really do not know how to write with more plainness than I have hitherto done, I am afraid that, do what I will, I shall not, after all, be able to make myself understood by *you*. But if I be understood by *others*, I must be content; and of this I do not much despair.

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As to the want of *sincerity* with which you repeatedly charge me, it is an affair between God and my own conscience. Many circumstances, however on which we form judgments in such cases are before the world; and some persons may judge that if I had been possessed of much of the commodity called *hypocrisy*, as it is a very *marketable* one, I might have made something more of it, and have kept myself out of some difficulties by the help of it.

It is possible, however, that, in reality, you may not be quite so uncharitable to me as I first imagined; since in one of the places, in which you suggest this charge, you seem to use the term in a sense somewhat different from that in which it is commonly used. For you speak of it as of a thing of which I may not be conscious myself. "I should be afraid," you say, p. 49. "that you have, in this instance, forgot yourself, and not acted with that sincerity which the world may have expected from you. I fear this declaration will not be to your advantage in the opinion of your adversary. He will think it affects either your head, or your heart."

Now, Sir, I must inform you, since you seem to be ignorant of it, that tho' a man's *memory* may fail him, and he may forget a thing of which he had been informed, and might have been expected to remember, it is not, in the nature of things, that this should ever be the case with respect to *conscience*, and *sincerity*. If I tell a *lie*, I must know it at the time; because the very definition of a lie implies that it *is* known at the time. A lie is not a mere *falsehood*, or untruth, but an *untruth known to be so*. This, however, is exactly of a piece with every other definition, or distinction, on which any thing has depended in the whole of your book.

Another charge of *forgetfulness* is rather better stated than this, though the argument in which it is introduced is not more solid than the rest. You say, p. 78, "How
 " comes it that you sometimes forget your
 " necessarian charity, and so cruelly fall
 " foul of Dr. Beattie, and not only of
 " Dr. Beattie, and his instinctive common
 " sense, but of some others who differ
 " from you in opinion, and whom you treat
 " with not a little roughness. Perhaps,
 " as

“ as a necessarian, you do not abuse them
 “ for their failings in the ultimate sense of
 “ the word, but in the common sense of
 “ it, which may afford them some conso-
 “ lation, if they understand your meaning.”
 And, indeed, Sir, they must have gone a little
 deeper into this business than you seem to
 have done, if they do understand this distinc-
 tion.

After a good deal of *sarcastic humour*,
 terminating with your supposing that I
 must be looked upon as the “ chief pillar
 “ of the necessarian cause,” you say “ If
 “ the virtues abovementioned” (those
 which I have ascribed to the influence of
 the doctrine of necessity) “ do naturally
 “ arise from your system, we may suppose
 “ them to be eminently in you. But herein,
 “ I think that I perceive some little failure.
 “ If anger and resentment are incompatible
 “ with necessity: if, when devoted to
 “ that system, you cannot *bate a man*, and
 “ are really gifted with that infinitely
 “ refined tenderness and compassion for
 “ others, which you have mentioned, how
 “ comes it that there is not a greater show
 “ of it; for you are sensible that *the tree is*
 “ *known by its fruits.*”

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And, indeed, Sir, they must have gone a little deeper into this business than you seem to have done, if they do understand this distinction.

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But

But pray, Sir, do not you profess the christian religion, and to be a member of the established church of England, and yet declare every day, that you "do things that you ought not to do," that is, things inconsistent with christianity. You also pretend to *reason*, but is every thing you say or write *rational*. If you do think so, you are greatly mistaken; and yet I would not thence infer that you are not a man, or a worthy man. Now I do not pretend to perfection, or a perfect correspondence between my principles and my conduct, any more than you do. I have several times disclaimed it, and in this very respect, as, with a proper share of candour, you should have quoted.

Besides, how do you know, but that, notwithstanding all the crimes you charge me with, I am not a much better man than I should have been with other principles; and that, bad as the case is, it is not much better both for Dr. Beattie and yourself, that I am even a necessarian.

But indeed, good Sir (to return your own mode of complimenting) you greatly over-charge

PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY. 11

charge this part of your picture. I do not *bate* Dr. Beattie. I appeal to impartial readers, whether my address to him be not on the whole, expressive of respect. I am sure I did not intend it to be otherwise; and the only harsh expression I have used with respect to him, is that which constitutes the best apology that I could suggest for the readiness he seemed to express to give up the doctrine of Divine prescience rather than that of philosophical liberty, concerning which you yourself say, that "a man must then give up the *scriptures*,
" and, with them, his *religion*, and his
" *faith*." Is not this much harsher than any thing that I have said on the same subject? If Dr. Beattie be offended with *me*, he must be much more, Sir, with you.

I am very far from charging Dr. Beattie, as you repeatedly charge me, with *insincerity* or *impiety*; and I appeal to our common readers, if his arrogance, I mean as a *writer* (for I have not the pleasure that you have, of being acquainted with him personally) be not much greater than mine. He even thought it necessary to make a laboured apology for it. If there be any thing
too

too strongly expressed in that performance it is in my examination of Dr. Reid's treatise. For as to Dr. Oswald, I still say of *his* work that could I have expressed even more indignation and contempt, I should have done it, and have thought it justifiable. And yet I am far from charging him with *insincerity*.

It is something too curious to be suffered to pass unnoticed, that, after quoting at full length two paragraphs of mine, which you censure as peculiarly obnoxious, making the amount of them to be equivalent to making Dr. Beattie "an atheist, and to deny his Creator," you add, p. 38, "But let us stop here; and it were well if we could draw a veil over what has preceded, that it might be had no more in remembrance." I suppose, therefore, that by this you meant *to draw a veil over* my infirmities. But pray then, Sir, what would you have done if you had meant to *expose* them? If this be to consign them to oblivion, what would you have done to perpetuate the remembrance of them? For, certainly, there must be some difference, though I am not able to find it.

In this your favourite chapter of *abuse*, which occupies a great proportion of your pamphlet, you, on one occasion, take a method, which, for *absurdity* or *assurance* (of which you may take your choice) has, I think, never yet been equalled, if attempted, by any controversial writer. It is when you declaim at large on the supposition that I myself confess the necessarians to be guilty of the very faults that I ascribe to the Calvinists, as distinguished from the necessarians. Now to alledge that, in *your* opinion, there is no difference between them, is no apology for you; because your argument, or ridicule, whatever you call it, goes upon the idea of that being *my own* opinion.

Among other things I have charged some Calvinists with *malignity of heart*. You answer, p. 80, "But if your system, as you say, is superior to all others, and is productive of nothing but peace, charity, and benevolence, attended with all the gentle effects of tenderness and compassion; whence proceeds such malignity and ill-will, with all the bitterness of gall: How came the elect, whom we should have thought

“thought exempt from these inferior qualities, to abound with them more than others.”

I had charged the system of Calvinism with a tendency to *gloom* and *melancholy*, and had represented Calvinists as “in a state of *doubt* with respect to the evidence of their conversion, and what they call the work of grace in their hearts, &c.” You immediately reply, p. 82, “At this rate, I do not see any the least advantage that a necessarian has in proof of his orthodoxy. There is nothing that can persuade us of the superior excellence of his system. He is described as in a state of uncertainty, if not of infatuation; and his principles are said to lead to gloom and melancholy, &c.” You, Sir, on a former occasion, expressed a doubt whether my *head* or my *heart* was in fault. Pray where is the fault in this case. Where ever it lies, it is a very gross one.

On this subject, I must, likewise, mention your truly pitiable ignorance of what relates to religion, and the obvious distinctions of it in this country. When you charge me with abusing the Calvinists, you consider

sider me as speaking ill of a *community* to which I once belonged, and “ a community which has produced some excellent men, particularly a Leland and a Foster.” Now, Sir, I must inform you (happening to be a little better informed myself) that the Calvinists are no community at all, in this country, except your own church, the tenets of which are strictly Calvinistical, be that community; and of this community Leland and Foster certainly were not.

Calvinism, Sir, is a denomination that respects *opinions* only, and not *societies*, or *communities*. But, still, if you had known any thing of Leland, or Foster, you must have known, that they were the farthest in the world from being in opinion Calvinists, all of whom, though you say, p. 79, only *many of them*, are rigid Predestinarians. On the contrary, they were men particularly obnoxious to the Calvinists, the latter of them especially.

If by Calvinists you mean the *Independents*, which is now a common use of the term, it makes no better for you; for Leland was a Presbyterian, and Foster a Baptist.

If

If by Calvinists you mean *Dissenters* in general, which I suspect from your saying that many of them are rigid predestinarians, how have I quitted them, as you say I have done? I assure you, Sir, I am no member of the church of England, any more than I am of the church of Rome. Great as my crimes are, not being any son of hers, I have not disgraced that venerable matron. In every possible sense of the word, therefore, what you say of Calvinists is absurd, and contrary to fact. Such extreme ignorance of *things at home* is altogether inexcusable in any writer.

Call the subject of this section, if you please, *prefatory matter*; it was no more than necessary to prepare the reader for the still grosser blunders, if possible, than you have made respecting the main argument.

SECTION

SECTION II.

*Of what relates to the proper ARGUMENT
for the Doctrine of Necessity.*

I Had thought that, if it had been possible, by the use of language, to explain wherein *necessary determination*, as opposed to proper *self determination* consists, so that no person could have mistaken it, it had been done by myself. It is not that a man has no *will* at all, or that he cannot *do* whatever he wills, or pleases; but that his volitions are *definite in definite circumstances*. Therefore, though a man exerts a real and proper volition, it is so circumscribed by the circumstances, or motives, under which it is made, that it *cannot be otherwise than it is*. Now this, Sir, you appear never to have rightly apprehended, and there would be no end of quoting all

C

you

you say that might be produced in proof of what I have now advanced.

The very first passage that occurs on the subject, p. 2, shews it sufficiently. "Upon the most diligent inquiry," you say, "I am persuaded that mankind have a self-determining power, that, *upon mature deliberation, and just reasoning*, they can make a free and proper election, and can not only chuse, but reject, as shall seem best to their own judgment." But pray, good Sir, did any necessarian ever deny this. If he did, he must have been such a defender of *necessity*, as you are of *liberty*. A necessarian is so far from denying this, that his principles absolutely require it. For, according to them, something that may be called *judgment* necessarily precedes volition, and the volition is always directed by that judgment, being determined by what to it appears preferable at the time.

"Who," you say, p. 39, "ever asserted that the mind was never under any influence, and that the will was not determined by motives." What could any necessarian say more to his own purpose? For my own part, I cannot express my

own principles in more proper, or more decisive language.

But you add, “ the great question is, whether these motives are coercive, whether their influence be irresistible; so that the mind has no power of election, and cannot by any means reject. You will tell me this is owing to a stronger motive, which overcomes the weaker. This I shall not controvert.” Then, let me tell you, Sir, there is nothing in the whole business that you *can* controvert, that will be to any purpose.

But I must take in what you subjoin. “ All I now say is, whatever influence there may be, we are blessed with reason, to consider and judge, and have a power to reject or to chuse.” But, Sir, does any necessarian deny that man is endowed with reason? So far is he from denying that *consideration* and *judgment* precede volition, and direct it, that this is the very circumstance that his scheme requires, in order to exclude *self-determination*, which it effectually does. Indeed, Sir, here you are got upon clear *necessarian ground*, though, being unfortunately bewildered,

as you truly say of yourself, *you know not where you are.*

Very far, Sir, are you from advancing any thing that I can condemn when you say, p. 131, "Contrary to your notion, a thing which at any time happens might have happened otherwise, *if I had chosen it.*" Now this, also, is so far from being contrary to my notion, as you call it, that it is perfectly agreeable to my notion. For it implies that to have happened otherwise, a different choice must have been made; and you are as far as I can be from supposing that choice is not determined by motives.

In p. 27, you describe a particular mental process, and then add, "You will say, as usual, there must be a motive for this. We will grant there may, for instance a prospect of future good, or immediate gratification. But this motive often arises at my will, and proceeds from my own bosom." But if so, then, according to your own supposition, whence arises that will which called up the motive, but from some antecedent motive. For certainly the volition that calls up the motive is as much a volition, as that which is finally produced

duced by the motive. Will cannot be one thing, and have one set of properties, in one case, and be quite another thing, and have another set of properties, in another case.

What, Sir, but a mistake of the very ground of this controversy could make you say, p. 16, "What is *involuntary* but "another word for *necessary*?" whereas, I had said that *voluntary* is properly opposed to *involuntary*, and *contingent* to *necessary*; and this is what the first metaphysical writer you shall look into will tell you. Consequently, if a volition be so determined by the circumstances in which it is made, as to be strictly *definite*, it could not have been otherwise than what it is. It is, therefore, *necessary*. For it is upon this ground, and this only, that we denominate even the falling of a stone, or any thing else in the physical world, *necessary*. A thing is always said to be *necessary*, if, *ceteris manentibus*, it could not have been otherwise than it is, and *contingent*, if, *ceteris manentibus*, it might have been otherwise.

Hence, Sir, the *contradictions* with which you are perpetually, but ignorantly, charg-

ing me, as in p. 13. " I have been one while told that a man has a power of doing whatever he pleases, uncontrolled by any foreign principle, or power. You, in a few pages after, assure me, that the mind and will is always determined by a cause foreign to itself." Indeed, Sir, this is no contradiction at all; because foreign to the *will* is one thing, and foreign to the *mind*, another. Also, in direct contradiction to yourself, you speak of an *irresistible motive*, p. 96, as taking away all mental determination; though, in the passages lately quoted, you yourself suppose motives necessary to volition. Nothing sure can be at the same time necessary to volition, and yet necessarily take away all volition. This, Sir, is too palpable. Though the motive be *irresistible*, if it be a *motive*, it can influence nothing but the will, and therefore what it produces cannot be any thing but a volition.

In the same place you give such an account of the principles of the necessarians, as I really cannot tell what to make of. " Does it not seem in vain," you say, " to give a power of chusing, and at the same time to abridge us of all choice, to allow

“ low us a will, but to take away the power
 “ of willing, which, according to you;
 “ Sir, is directed by a foreign influence, an
 “ influence not arising from our own judg-
 “ ment, but an absolute decree, an irre-
 “ sistible motive, &c.”

But if, as you yourself allow, choice be always determined by motives, can a choice so made be called no choice, or is a choice determined by motives a thing that does not arise *from within ourselves*. Is an irresistible motive, and an absolute decree, the same thing? Are they equally foreign influences; when a mere *decree* is, in its own nature, so very foreign to us, that it is not possible that it should, of itself, affect the will at all; and a *motive* you allow to be *within us*, and always to influence us. This account, Sir, is so very full of contradiction and embarrassment, that I can hardly persuade myself, but that there must be something misprinted in the paragraph. So very incoherent a sentence, I think I never met with before.

I must also notice another curious contradiction, which you fancy you have discovered in what I have observed on this subject.

You say, p. 8, that “ the *mind*, with all
 “ its powers, and particularly the *will*, is
 “ never determined without some real or
 “ apparent cause foreign to itself. It seems
 “ impossible to make what you say here
 “ consistent with that which you mention-
 “ ed above. In this place the will, and
 “ the mind in general, must be determin-
 “ ed by a foreign cause. If we look but six
 “ pages backward, we find just the con-
 “ trary asserted, viz. that men are quite
 “ free to do whatever they will or please,
 “ both with respect to the operations of
 “ their own minds, and the motions of
 “ their bodies, uncontrolled by any fo-
 “ reign cause or principle. This seems to
 “ be an absolute contradiction.”

Now, Sir, all this that you have quoted
 would have appeared perfectly easy and
 consistent, if you had only known the very
 first principles of the doctrine of the hu-
 man mind, as laid down by Mr. Locke and
 others, or had only considered, that the
 will is only *one* faculty of the mind, so
 that, as I have just observed, what is fo-
 reign to the *will*, may not be foreign to
 the *mind* or the *man*. *Judgment* is not the
will,

will, nor are *motives* the will, but yet they are not things *foreign to the mind*; since they necessarily belong to it, and exist in it. Long, Sir, as you say you have studied this subject, you must study it again, and under some new master, and one who shall have the art of making things very plain indeed.

I cannot resist the temptation of quoting another extraordinary mistake of yours, though I must own that the time employed in transcribing so long an extract might have been better employed. “ When this “ has been thus settled,” you say, p. 15, “ you seem some how to compromise mat- “ ters, and, after all, to allow to the mind “ some power of judging for itself, the re- “ sult of which you would term a *definite* “ *choice*, and a *definite voluntary determina-* “ *tion* By this, if I apprehend you aright, “ is meant that a man has a *partial*, and “ *limited* power of election. But in ano- “ ther part of the work you assert, that in “ the scheme of liberty and necessity there “ is no medium. How then can we admit “ of this *compromise*, and by what means “ can these different assertions be rendered “ con-

“consistent? After all that you have been
 “so good as to explain, I am still left to
 “ask whether I am free, or not free.
 “For, as to this *qualified medium*, I know
 “not what to make of it; as you do not
 “either sufficiently define, or prove it;
 “and, at the same time, it seems to mili-
 “tate against your own avowed principles.
 “I therefore again require to know, in
 “respect to my thoughts and actions,
 “whether I am *voluntarily* or *necessarily*
 “determined.”

Now if you had taken the trouble to
 look into any common *English dictionary*;
 you would have saved yourself the trouble
 of this remark, and me the trouble of copy-
 ing it. For you would have found that the
 word *definite* means *strict* and *invariable*;
 and therefore a *definite choice* is far from
 being any medium between liberty and ne-
 cessity, but a proper *necessary choice*, or a
 choice that, constituted as man is, he could
 not but have made in any given circum-
 stances.

Every thing, Sir, begets its like, and
 one mistake introduces another. Or else
 they naturally follow one another, to steal
 your

your own quotation, *velut unda supervenit unda*. "I cannot," you say, p. 60, "conceive how your discipline and influence can have a certain and necessary effect, when other influences can counteract your views, and when your object may be frustrated." If, dear Sir, this case be too hard for you, I will put another exactly similar to it, that you may perhaps understand better. Cannot you then conceive that a weight of *one pound* in the scale A, has a certain and necessary effect, though it be overbalanced by a weight of *three pounds* in the opposite scale B? Is it not of so much consequence, that if *two* more pounds be added to it, it will completely balance the weight in B; whereas, without this one pound, *three* would be necessary for the same purpose. Make the experiment, if you please, and you will certainly find it to be so.

The next mistake on which I shall animadvert is no less extraordinary. When I spoke of the *indissoluble chain of causes*, determining a man's volitions and actions, from his birth to his death, what ground you then stood upon, or whether you stood upon

upon any ground at all, I cannot tell (and perhaps you will be as much at a loss to recollect yourself) but certainly you so far lost hold of this same chain, that you forgot what the links were made of. To drop this figure: you imagined that the whole of this chain consisted of *volitions*, that the thing represented by it was a mere *mental process*, and required uninterrupted thinking, from a man's birth to his death. But you must, and you shall be heard at length on this curious subject. We must see with what wonderful dexterity you handle this chain.

“ Let us still farther consider,” you say, p. 22, “ this series of events, this indissoluble chain of causes upon which your system is founded.—The chain of causes is never interrupted.—Motive arises from motive, and one idea produces another, and this inevitably. But, may I ask, Sir, have you ever considered the case of *sleep*? What connection has the last idea of a man, when he sinks at night into oblivion, with the first thought which occurs to him upon his awaking in the morning? We have reason to think there
“ is

“ is scarcely a revolution of four and twenty hours but this indissoluble chain is interrupted.”——

“ You will perhaps say that men think in their sleep, as is evident from their dreams. But do all men dream? Or if they do, what ensues, but a train of irregular and incoherent ideas, which are unconnected with one another, and quite independent of all foreign and remote influences. But, setting these things aside, have you considered the state of persons who suffer a deliquium?—— of persons drowned &c. In these instances, the connection spoken of must have been entirely broken off. If then the mind has no internal power of its own, by what means does it renew its train of thoughts, and how is it able to think again at all?——The last idea when it sunk into forgetfulness, and the first which occurred when it *languished into day*, cannot possibly have had any relation to each other. There has been a manifest breach in the chain, and the primary influence, if it existed, must have been in like manner interrupted.

“ From

“ From whence then does the mind recover
“ itself, and what impression is it which sets
“ the train of ideas in motion? &c. Is the
“ influence from within or from without?
“ It cannot be any external impulse. For
“ in those circumstances no immediate
“ operation of the senses can make a person
“ recur to events long passed—The im-
“ mediate impulse of the senses, and the
“ surrounding objects, cannot bring this
“ about. And as to the *original influence*
“ of which you treat, and the *chain of causes*,
“ there has been a stop put to the whole,
“ and the connection no longer subsists.
“ This power of recollection must there-
“ fore be from within, and is undoubtedly
“ owing to a proper energy of the mind,
“ a power of *self-exertion*, by which it is
“ enabled to call up and arrange its ideas at
“ pleasure, and to determine upon them
“ as shall seem best. And in consequence
“ of this we may conclude, that the will
“ is not under any arbitrary and blind in-
“ fluence, nor directed by necessity.”

I think, Sir, I have given you sufficient
time to manage this *chain*, but I perceive
you have quite lost your hold. However

as

as I have kept mine, I may perhaps assist you to lay hold of it once more.

Know then, that, there is in the human mind a power, or faculty, which Mr. Locke calls *the principle of association*, by means of which one idea recalls another formerly connected with it, and that, at all times, external objects have a power of exciting some ideas in us—Please, Sir, to read what I have now said over again. And when you are quite sure that you understand thus much, consider farther whether it be not possible, that, after the soundest sleep, or deliquium (the senses and brain not being materially injured, and the ideas formerly impressed upon it not being entirely cancelled) some object casually present, to the eye for instance, may affect the retina and consequently an idea be conveyed to the sensorium. That idea, having had old connexions with others, may call up its friends, and these in like manner, their several friends and acquaintance, till the whole croud of former ideas occupies the mind, and the business of combination, and arrangement. &c. &c. as described by Mr. Locke, goes on as usual. In the next article

article you are utterly bewildered and lost in your own eloquence.

“ From what you lay down,” you say, p. 19, “ that all persons, in the same situation, would, after any interval, act precisely as they had done, it follows that “ if the world were renewed, all the same “ occurrences would necessarily happen “ again. If, after ever so many myriads “ of ages, a man were formed in the same “ manner, and in the same circumstances, “ as the person from whom we are all descended, he would act exactly as Adam “ is presumed to have acted: he would “ have the same posterity, they would travel over the same ground, find out the “ same arts, at the same periods, and perform, without the least deviation, all “ and every of those things which have “ been already performed. Every step “ they should take would be found the “ same, every look, every turn, every involuntary gesture would be repeated. “ The winds would blow with the same “ variation, the rain must fall to a drop as “ it had done before. The very dust, “ the smallest motes, which float in any medium,

“ medium would be, in number and qua-
 “ lity, the same. For, according to your
 “ principles, the same original impulse
 “ must be attended with the like conse-
 “ quences. And if we allow a failure in
 “ the smallest degree, there must be ulti-
 “ mately an unavoidable difference through
 “ the whole arrangement. But such dif-
 “ ference is inconsistent with that primary
 “ influence, and that necessity which you
 “ maintain. There must, therefore, be
 “ a perfect similitude throughout. These
 “ are the necessary consequences from your
 “ principles; but I believe nobody will be
 “ persuaded that this would ever obtain.
 “ Let any person, after he has signed his
 “ name, try to write it three or four times
 “ precisely in the same manner, and see
 “ whether it perfectly accords. If he can-
 “ not do it when he undertakes it with
 “ premeditation, he will hardly bring it to
 “ perfection when he acts without design.
 “ Or let him walk an hundred yards, and
 “ then try to pace the same ground at the
 “ like intervals, and in the same time. If
 “ he could not perform it immediately,
 “ he would not expect it at the distance of
 D “ three

“ three days, or thirty days, much less
“ after an interval of ages.”

I have made this long quotation to give my reader a just idea of your great powers in the *rhetorical way*, in order to make him some amends for his disappointment with respect to excellence of any other kind. What you want in *ideas*, you make up in *words*, and though you have not *precision*, you excell in *amplification*. Now I do not pretend to any excellence of *this* kind. Every man, and every animal, has his own weapons. The bull has his horns, and the horse his heels. You have Oratory, I have Logic. So conspicuous in you, Sir, are the powers of *imagination*, that they go hand in hand with your *learning*, in the most elaborate of your works.

Whether you will think the return adequate or not, you must be content with a *logical distinction*, in return for the entertainment you have afforded me; and my distinction is a very plain one. It is between the power of *man*, and that of *God*, which, great as it is, you had quite overlooked upon this occasion; though, when it serves your purpose, you can declaim on this topic as
copiously

copiously as upon any other, and of this I shall produce a specimen in its proper place.

It is true, as you say, that no man can do any very complex thing twice over exactly in the same manner; but it is because it is not possible for him to place himself, body and mind, in a situation sufficiently exact for the purpose. But to convince you how little your mode of reasoning affects a necessarian, I must give you a case similar to it, and one that you may better comprehend.

Fill a bag with billiard balls, and then shake them out on the table. Every ball will, at length, settle in a definite place (please here to recollect the denifition of the word *definite*, or my instance will be nothing to the purpose) and were it possible to place them all exactly as they were before, and to pour them out exactly in the same manner, they would certainly settle in the same places that they occupied before. You cannot doubt of this, because nothing is concerned besides physical and mechanical laws, all of which you allow to operate necessarily; and you would laugh at any man who should deny the necessary influence

of those laws, merely because neither he nor you, if you were to make the trial, could so place the balls in the bag, and so shake them out, as that they should actually settle in the same places twice together. And, to adopt one of your own modes of polite address, Believe me, Sir, the brain of a man is a much more complex thing than a bag of billiard balls. Here then, Sir, is my logical *distinction* and *example*, in return for your rhetorical declamation.

As I hope I have given you some pleasure in submitting to the perusal of my readers so very long an extract from your work as the preceding, and I am desirous of gratifying you as far as I can, I shall proceed to make another long extract of a similar kind and not less excellent. “ You, indeed, tell me, Sir,” p. 25, “ that every thought is predetermined, and in every act of volition I am forcibly impelled, so that I could not, in any instance have made my election otherwise than I have done. Every movement of the mind, you say, arises from a *pressing uneasiness*.” By the way this is not what I say, but what Mr. Locke says. “ This theory may ap-
“ pears

“ pears specious, but it seems to run
 “ counter to all experiences; and the con-
 “ trary, if I mistake not, is self-evident.
 “ I sit at this instant at my ease, in a calm
 “ and dispassionate state of mind, as you are
 “ pleased, Sir, to recommend. I perceive
 “ myself at full liberty, and know not of
 “ any external impulse to determine me
 “ either in my thoughts or actions. I pur-
 “ pose to move, but antecedently examine
 “ whether I am under any bias, or necessity,
 “ or directed by any foreign power. I find
 “ none. In the vast series of causes, so
 “ often mentioned, I do not perceive one
 “ that will have any share in the effect
 “ which I am about to produce. The
 “ whole originates in myself, whether I
 “ move my body, or my arm, or am con-
 “ tent with extending a finger. The
 “ like appears in respect to my thoughts.
 “ I am here equally free, and among the
 “ various objects which are ready at my
 “ call, I arbitrarily chuse those to which
 “ my fancy leads me. You tell me every
 “ thought is an effect, and that it is con-
 “ nected with a prior idea, by which it
 “ was produced, I cannot see any such uni-

“ form affinity or correspondence, and to
“ give a proof of my liberty and indepen-
“ dence, I will for once expatiate freely,
“ and produce a series of unconnected ideas
“ from my own imagination. I according-
“ ly, without any pressing uneasiness, think
“ of a tree, of time, of the ocean, of dark-
“ ness of a cone, of truth, of a tower, of
“ probability, of Therfites, of love, of
“ Epidaurus, of Socrates, of a mole, of
“ casuistry, of the Iliad, of Otaheite, of
“ Tenterden steeple, of a mole, of a mouse-
“ trap. In doing this I did not find that
“ I was restrained by any law of nature, or
“ impelled by any foreign power. Nor
“ can I at last perceive that these desultory
“ thoughts have the least connection with
“ one another, much less with any prior
“ ideas. You assure me that they must
“ unavoidably have a reference, and that
“ they are dependent upon others which
“ have preceded. In short, according to
“ your principles, they arose so necessarily
“ in my mind, that four days hence, or
“ five years hence, in the same circum-
“ stances, and with the same disposition,
“ I should infallibly make the very same
“ choice

“ choice. But this seems contrary to ex-
 “ perience: for though I am as precisely in
 “ the same circumstances as we can sup-
 “ pose any man to be, and likewise in the
 “ same disposition of mind; yet after an
 “ interval of a very few minutes, I am not
 “ able to go over a fourth part of this
 “ series. And however cogent the neces-
 “ sity may be, I can recollect very little
 “ more than the mole, and the mouse-
 “ trap.”

You think, Sir, that the curious assort-
 ment of ideas you have presented us with
 had no connection, mediate, you must
 mean, or immediate. But odd as you,
 who appear to know so little of the human
 mind, may think it, I have no doubt but
 they really had. Are you sure that you
 have omitted no other ideas, that might
 connect those that you have produced? Or,
 which you may better recollect, did you at
 first set them down exactly in the order in
 which they now stand. Were not the
 words *love* and a *tower* a little nearer to-
 gether, and did not the story of Hero and
 Leander occur to you; and are you quite

sure that nothing squeezed in between the *mole* and the *mouse-trap*.

You say you place yourself as precisely in the same circumstances as we can suppose any man to be, and likewise in the same disposition of mind. But, Sir, what you may *suppose* to be the same, may not be *precisely so*, and a very slight alteration in the disposition of your mind, perhaps the position of your body, may put the *mole* in the place of the *mouse-trap*, or, vice versa.

That you have never read Mr. Hobbes, I take for granted. Indeed if you had, you would have known a little more of the subject of which you treat than you now do. Somewhere in his writings, but I do not now recollect the place, you would have found a pertinent observation to the present purpose, and a proper example. Some gentlemen were talking of the *civil wars* in England, when one of them suddenly asked what was the value of a *Jewish shekel*. To appearance, these had as little connection as any two in your group. But this gentleman was more ingenuous, or more fortunate than you: for being interrogated while
the

the whole train was fresh in his memory, he said the *civil war* brought to his mind the *death of king Charles*, the death of Charles *that of our Saviour*, and this made him think of the *thirty pieces of silver*, which he supposed were *shekels*, for which Judas betrayed him. Now all this process might take place in less time than would be sufficient to write down any of the two words in your collection. But you seem to have no idea of the rapidity of thought, or how slight circumstances are sufficient, by the law of association, to introduce any particular idea. And yet the connection of the several parts of your ingenious system of mythology is often extremely delicate.

When I look over the several articles of this section, and see that you speak of necessity as something that *excludes will*, calling it a *foreign influence*, *arbitrary decree*, *chain of causes*, &c. &c. I cannot help thinking but that, as all our ideas of things *mental* are derived from things *corporeal*, your idea of necessity is that of a great iron chain, fastened round a man's body, which he cannot get rid of, and by which he is dragged *volens volens*. But, dear Sir, do
not

not fright yourself in this manner. *Necessity*, Sir, *philosophical necessity*, is a more gentle thing than this iron chain that haunts your imagination ; and though you are led by it, you at the same time go just where you please ; and whenever you become a necessarian, you will be in the case of the man who found that he had been speaking *prose* all his life, though without knowing it.

SECTION III.

Of the Divine Prescience.

I Am at length come to the topic on which you write with the greatest pomp and power ; and here being, as I suppose you thought, a *nodus deo vindice dignus*, you introduce the Divine Being himself as imposing everlasting silence upon me, and you pour out such a torrent of scripture quotations, that if the *application* was at all pertinent,

nent, I should have no power of reply. But this being wanting, your argument is *brutum fulmen*. As I perceive you have not yet understood my argument on this subject, I shall repeat it more particularly; and I think it is capable of being made so plain that it shall be impossible either to misunderstand or refute it. I state it as follows:

Nothing can be *seen to be* what it is not, because it would then *be* what it is not. The Deity himself cannot see *black* to be *white*, or *white black*; because black is not white, nor is white black. If *sight*, or *perception*, or *knowledge in general*, cannot change the antecedent nature of objects, neither can the *divine* perception or knowledge. Otherwise the Deity might see *two* to be *three*, or *three* to be *two*. And surely, Sir, with your leave, there cannot be any presumption, or impiety, in saying this.

If this be just; it must be true, and no presumption, to assert, that the Deity himself cannot *see* that to be *certain*, which is *in itself contingent*, or that to be contingent, which is absolutely certain. Now, Sir,
what.

what is meant by any thing being *contingent* but that it either *may* or *may not* be. But for a thing to be *seen* as certain, it must *in itself* be certain; and therefore the *possibility* of its *not being* must be excluded. Consequently, any event being foreseen *certainly to be* is incompatible with its being even *possible* not to be. Nothing, therefore, of which it can be truly said that it either *may* or *may not be* (which you maintain is the case with every determination of the mind of man) can be an object of foreknowledge, even to the Deity himself. To maintain the contrary is, in fact, the same thing as saying that the same event is both *contingent in itself*, and yet *certain to God*; or that, though, in reality, it may or may not be, yet, contrary to the nature and truth of things, he knows that it certainly will be. I therefore say that if a man be possessed of a power of proper self-determination, which implies that the Deity himself cannot controul it, the Deity himself cannot foresee what the actual determination will be. Surely, Sir, there cannot be any argument more conclusive than this. You, however, reply as follows:

“ Surely,

“ Surely, Sir,” you say, p. 28, “ this is very bold, even to a degree of rashness, and at the same time your mode of reasoning seems to my judgment totally inconclusive. I think it may be obviated by a thousand circumstances in common life.” Let us hear one of them.

“ A child,” you say, p. 29, “ may determine to take a walk in a garden, and I may have a power to controul his purpose”——Indeed, Sir, I cannot go any farther with you in this case, because I want a case in which there is a power of determination, that I *cannot* controul. What is your next instance out of the thousand that you say you could produce?

“ I sow a field,” you say, p. 16, “ with wheat, and, if I pleased, I could make an alteration, by plowing it up, and sowing it with rye, or barley. But I cannot see how the mere power of varying my purpose, can ruin that purpose.”——But pray, Sir, what has this to do with *prescience*? Some of the remaining nine hundred and ninety-eight cases must be produced, but all the thousand will avail nothing, unless they be very different from these; and certainly

tainly you would not have given a specimen of the *worst* in the thousand.

But you add, and insist upon being heard, "You make no distinction, p. 28, between what the Deity can do, and what he really does; and you argue as if power and performance were the same thing." But, surely, Sir, before any act of man can be *foreseen*, it must be rendered *certain*, and there is no method of making it certain, but by controlling that power which would make it uncertain. Consequently the foreknowledge of God must be perpetually at variance with the self-determining power of man.

But I must, it seems, hear you farther, and I am willing to exercise as much patience as possible. "You proceed," p. 30, "to enforce your argument by the authority of Mr. Hobbes, by whom you think the affair has been satisfactory stated. *Denying necessity*, says this writer, "Works, p. 480, *destroys both the decrees, and prescience of Almighty God. For whatever God has purposed to bring to pass by man, as an instrument, or foresees shall come to pass, a man, if he has liberty,*"
 "might

* might frustrate, and make not come to
 “ pass; and God should either not foreknow
 “ it and not decree it, or he shall foreknow
 “ such things shall be as shall never be, and
 “ decree what shall never come to pass. What
 “ a rash, contemptible, and short sight-
 “ ed reptile is man! Who would think
 “ that this insect of a day would pre-
 “ sume to limit omniscience and control
 “ the powers of the Almighty! Bold and
 “ inconsiderate, to form a judgment of the
 “ divine energy by his own scanty faculties,
 “ and endeavour to reduce his creator to the
 “ standard of man! Besides, what a round
 “ of absurdity is there in this weak and
 “ impious supposition. One would imagine
 “ that none but an idiot could have stated
 “ such a case; wherein things are sup-
 “ posed to be foreknown which shall never
 “ be, and things decreed in consequence of
 “ foreknowledge which shall never come
 “ to pass; in short, when it is said that
 “ what God foresees is not foreseen, for it
 “ may be frustrated by man, and rendered
 “ ineffectual. This, Sir, is the argument
 “ which you think is clearly stated”

I hope,

I hope, Sir, you are now satisfied, and will not complain of my not giving you sufficient attention. I did not even stop you when you called Mr. Hobbes, and consequently myself, who quoted the passage from him with approbation, *weak, impious, and an idiot.*

Mr. Hobbes's argument is a very plain one, and the manner in which it is expressed is sufficiently clear to every candid and intelligent reader. For the sake, however, of very dull, or very captious readers (for whom it is hardly worth while to write at all) it might perhaps have been better expressed as follows: "Whatever God proposes to accomplish by means of man, they, if they be possessed of a self-determining power, may frustrate. In which case, God must either never foretell any thing, or declare that a thing shall come to pass, which, for any thing that he can tell, may never come to pass at all."

Now, Sir, how does your fine flourish about the *power of God*, and the *weakness of man*, at all apply to such an argument as this. What *round of absurdity* (or square of absurdity) what *weakness*, or *idiocy*, or
impiety

impiety, is there in this. There are, Sir, as genuine marks of a reverence for God in the writings of Mr. Hobbes as in any of yours ; and it little becomes you to charge so superior a genius, so wonderfully acute a writer, and so excellent a scholar as he was, one of the first characters of his age in those respects, with *weakness* or *idiocy*, whatever right you may have to involve *me* in the same charge with him. Besides, if you mean to enter upon the stage of controversial writing, and wish that such opprobrious epithets as these should have any effect, you should be more sparing of them, and at least not produce them but where there was more of the face of probability in the application of them. Should such an use of these terms, by your example, become general, we shall be obliged to change their signification in all English dictionaries.

I have another fault to find with your argument, which is, that you make that to be assumed by Mr. Hobbes, which he expressly charges upon his adversary. But this is a practiced feint with you, and an improvement of your own in the art of controversy.

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In the next place, you describe at large the manner in which man gains his knowledge. "But, my good Sir," you say, p. 31, "can you possibly think that the knowledge of the Almighty is obtained in this servile and precarious manner, and that his wisdom proceeds after the human mode of reasoning. You may as well ascribe to him the eyes of a man to gain intelligence, and the human limbs to perform his high operations."

Now, to return your compliment, my good Sir, you make this slight mistake, the question is not at all concerning the *manner* of obtaining knowledge, but concerning *the thing to be known*. I may go laboriously to work, in order to prove that the three internal angles of a right lined triangle are equal to two right angles, and the Deity may know this in any other manner that you can, or cannot conceive; but he cannot see them to be equal to *three* or *four* right angles. So, also, if a thing be in itself contingent, he cannot see it to be certain, let his *manner* of knowing be what it will.

I per-

I perceive, however, you will not be satisfied unless I hear you farther in the tone of *authority*, now that *argument* fails you. "Now, Sir," you say, p. 32, "I should be unwilling to be guilty of any disrespect towards you, and to make use of any harsh expression; but surely you are highly presumptuous, not to say *self-sufficient*." By the way, in what respect is *self-sufficiency* more reprehensible than *presumption*? "How can you, limited as you are in your faculties, pretend to determine about divine intelligence. You tell me that you believe the scriptures, and I presume that you are sincere." For this I am obliged to you, Sir, as it is more than you always allow me. "Do you not then know that *the wisdom of man is foolishness with God*, Cor. iii. 19, that *his ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts*, Is. lv. 9. *To whom then will you liken me, and shall I be equal saith the holy one*, Is. xl. 25. *Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary: there is no search-*

“ing of his understanding, Is. xl. 28. *Thy*
 “righteousness, says the Psalmist, *standeth*
 “like the great mountains, *thy judgments*
 “are like the great deep, Ps. xxxvi. 6.
 “Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord,
 “Who hath instructed him, and taught him
 “in the path of judgment, and shewed him
 “the way of understanding, Is. xl. 13, 14.
 “This last, Sir, I am sorry to say, is the
 “part which you have taken, by pretend-
 “ing to prescribe to the Deity. You have
 “joined yourself with those who say, *How*
 “doth God know, and is there wisdom in the
 “most high, Ps. lxxiii. 11. *And thou sayest*
 “how doth God know, can be judge through
 “the dark cloud, Job xxii. 13. In what
 “manner does the same sacred writer final-
 “ly determine this point. Attend, Sir,
 “for he settles the whole in these few but
 “important words: *He beareth all high*
 “*things, He is a king over all the children*
 “*of pride*, Job xli. 34. From the quota-
 “tions above given we may learn to hum-
 “ble ourselves when we speak of our Crea-
 “tor, and to mention his divine attributes
 “with reverence.”

Well, Sir, I have now heard you fairly
 out, and have had the patience to hear my-
 self

self ranked with *Atheists*, and persons utterly *profligate and abandoned*; for such only the passages you have quoted from the Psalms and the book of Job respect. But I want to know what is all this to your purpose. Had you been a divine, I should have concluded that it had been an extract from some *practical sermon*, and that your amanuensis had, by mistake, got hold of this, instead of something else that you had given him to transcribe for this place.

If, in this place, your amanuensis has deceived you, I suspect, that in the next your printer has omitted the word *not*. You say, p. 116, "The interference of the Deity is quite opposite to the doctrine of absolute decrees." Whereas I think it favourable to that doctrine, and, in fact, they have always been held together. Who, Sir, believe more concerning frequent interpositions of the Deity than the Calvinists, the great advocates for absolute decrees? But as you appear not to know who the Calvinists are, you are probably unacquainted with this circumstance.

SECTION IV.

Of the Charge of INFIDELITY, and the Conclusion.

HOW you should have taken it into your head that I am an unbeliever in revelation, is to me altogether unaccountable. If you had known any thing of me, either from my writings, or by character, you must have known that I am, by profession, a *dissenting minister*; that till lately I was a stated preacher, and now am an occasional, and pretty frequent one. Doing this, as I now must do, from *choice*, certainly affords very little presumption for your charge, unless you imagine (which with your extreme ignorance of every thing relating to dissenters, you very possibly may) that *all dissenters* are unbelievers, and that
your

your church of England has the sole right and property of all the christianity there is in the world.

If you look over the catalogue of my publications, you will find that the greatest part of them are on theological subjects. The second volume of my *Institutes* is a regular defence of the system of revelation, and most of my philosophical writings bear sufficient marks of a respect for religion and christianity.

To imagine, after this, that I am an unbeliever in christianity, is not easily accounted for, in a *man of letters*, who might be expected to be free from the prejudices of the vulgar, who, in all ages and nations, have ranked those whose opinions have been considerably different from their own with atheists or unbelievers. You, Sir, I must suppose had no other information than this, and then (not to offend your ears with the sound of too vulgar a proverb) taking this notion, that I am an unbeliever, for granted, you fancied you found traces of it in this treatise of *Necessity*, the only work of mine, I presume, that you ever looked into.

I shall only animadvert on a few of the passages in which this charge of infidelity is insinuated or expressed. The first is so little to your, or to *any* purpose, that I own I can make nothing of it, and quote it only that persons of more sagacity than myself may try what they can do with it. “ When,
“ p. 117, you have mentioned the providence of God in one part, you seem to set
“ it aside in the next. In this you go
“ great lengths. The interposition of the
“ Deity, mentioned in the Old and New
“ Testament, is not by you uniformly allowed. You aver boldly that many particular events, said expressly to have been
“ appointed by God, were not appointed
“ by him; and even the persons who have
“ been represented as inspired by God,
“ were not under any divine influence,
“ p. 151, and you add, in confirmation of
“ what you have said, that in the instances,
“ whatever they may be, to which you
“ allude, there appears, from the circumstances of the history, to have been no
“ proper interposition of the divine being,
“ no real miracle, but every thing took
“ place according to the common establish-
“ ed

“ ed course of nature, p. 131. As this is
 “ somewhat extraordinary, it is a pity that
 “ you did not illustrate what you maintain
 “ by some examples. What you mean by
 “ there being no proper interposition I
 “ know not. We have before us an alter-
 “ native which admits of no medium.
 “ The deity either does interpose, or he
 “ does not. Therefore, if you are true to
 “ your principles, you should speak out, and
 “ maintain, without equivocation, that
 “ God does not at all interfere in the world;
 “ in other words, that there is no provi-
 “ dence.”

I ask pardon, Sir, I do think I now under-
 stand something of what you are about.
 But I perceive you are not at all apprised of
 what I was about. I had said, that many
 things were foretold which depended upon
 the volitions of men, which volitions
 were produced exactly as other volitions
 are, without any particular interference
 of the deity to control them. But tho’
 I was expressly referring to the Jews and
 Romans, by whom our saviour was cruci-
 fied, and whom you yourself will hardly
 say were *miraculously inspired* with their de-
 termi-

termination for that purpose, you seem to have imagined that I was treating concerning the providence of God in general, or of miraculous interpositions. To make out of this that I am an unbeliever in all revelations, discovers such a perverseness of understanding, as I have not yet seen in any writer. Sir, you will find much better proof of my being an unbeliever in my *History of Electricity*, or on the very face of my *Chart of Biography*; and I rather wonder you should not have quoted both those works for that purpose. It must certainly have been because you were not acquainted with them. I shall not presume to follow you in what you here add concerning the *influence of God*, and the *Holy Spirit*, as you and I, I perceive, have very different ideas of what is meant by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

Indeed Sir, this article is of a much more serious nature than any that I have animadverted upon hitherto. With respect to other things, I have chiefly indulged myself in laughing at your *ignorance*, and *conceit*; but this charge of infidelity, is a most gross and groundless *calumny*, for which
you

you are accountable to a higher tribunal than that of the public, to which we now appeal.

In what I am now going to quote you charge me, Sir, with *vilifying and debasing the apostles*, and more than insinuate that I am an unbeliever in their divine mission; and all this merely for having advanced that they were not strictly speaking necessarians, or philosophers. The only extenuation of your guilt is your extreme ignorance of the subject on which your presumption has led you to write; on which account, the malignant paragraph I am about to quote affords abundant matter for its own refutation.

“Tho’ you speak with your usual caution
 “and reserve,” you say, p. 121, “you
 “afford us too plainly an indication of
 “your real opinion of those writers, to
 “whom you pretend that you had been so
 “much beholden. Your words are very
 “remarkable. *Not that I think the sacred
 “writers were, strictly speaking, necessarians,
 “for they were not philosophers; but their
 “habitual devotion naturally led them to refer
 “all things to God, without reflecting on the
 “rigorous meaning of their language; and*
 “very

“ very probably had they been interrogated
 “ on the subject, they would have appeared
 “ not to be apprised of the proper extent of
 “ the necessarian scheme, and would have
 “ answered in a manner unfavourable to it.

“ Who must not after this, pity the fate
 “ of the poor apostles and evangelists.
 “ Alas, Sir, how very low they must be
 “ in your estimation. They who for ages
 “ were thought to have been inspired, and
 “ to have been peculiarly directed by the
 “ spirit of truth, are at last supposed not
 “ to understand their own meaning.”

Here, Sir, you are once more making use of your own *original artifice*, and indeed we are all too apt to make the most of any little discovery of our own. When I expressly say the sacred writers were *not necessarians*, and did not even understand the system, could I possibly suppose that they meant to establish it?

“ They were not, you say, strictly speaking, necessarians. No, in good truth,
 “ Sir, nor were they in any respect of that
 “ denomination. They were not, you say,
 “ philosophers. It is true, Sir, they might
 “ not understand the doctrine of fixed
 “ air,

